

GOP Out to Lunch in Response to Report on Abuse of Power

Reps. Slaughter Takes Republicans to Task for Disingenuous Assertions

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter of New York, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Rules, joined with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of California yesterday at a press conference where they unveiled the release of, "Broken Promises: The Death of Deliberative Democracy," a new Congressional report detailing the unprecedented erosion of the democratic process in the Republican controlled Congress.

As expected, the Republican response to the report has been anything but straight forward as the Republican Majority spread misinformation to members of the media.

"The Republican Majority must be divorced from reality if they think they are conducting the operation of this House in a deliberative, open manner," said Rep. Slaughter. She added, "This report clearly shows how, ten years after their 'revolution,' House Republicans have completely abandoned any standard of procedural fairness or democratic accountability. They truly have become the most arrogant, unethical and corrupt majority in modern Congressional history."

The 147 page report can be found online at:

<http://www.democrats.house.gov/docs/brokenpromises.pdf>

The Republican Response vs. The Truth:

GOP CLAIM: "We always make an effort to accommodate the minority." - Jo Maney, spokeswoman for Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier: ([Reuters](#) - 03/08/05)

TRUTH: As the table on page 19 of the report shows, Chairman Dreier and the Rules Republicans made only a tiny number of Democratic amendments in order on the major bills the House considered in the 108th Congress. Of the 162 amendments Democrats proposed for these bills, Republicans allowed the House to consider only seven of them (or 4%).

GOP CLAIM: "This is more of the same from House Democrats - partisan attacks without any solutions and inflammatory rhetoric instead of a positive agenda." - Tom DeLay Statement ([United Press International](#) - 03/08/05)

TRUTH: Majority Leader DeLay has obviously not taken a look at this report, including its extensive "Recommendations" section. It's not the rhetoric in this report that's inflammatory, it's the facts. As the 58 footnotes and the almost 100 pages of charts and tables document, the current Republican leadership runs the most closed & bitterly partisan House in our history.

GOP CLAIM: "Republicans replied that Democrats just want to slow down the process and that the opposition has procedural guarantees that were routinely denied to the GOP when it was in the minority." ([Washington Post](#) - 03/08/05)

TRUTH: The report acknowledges (see p. 44) that as the majority party, Republicans have the right to move their agenda in the House. But just as Republicans like Rules Chairman Dreier and Vice Chairman Diaz-Balart argued for meaningful participation in the process when they were in the minority, Democrats are now doing the same. As Chairman

Dreier argued back in 1993, "While the majority party always has the right to establish the rules and legislative agenda for the House, it should recognize the need to place responsible limits on those powers which permit all Members to fully participate in the truly deliberative process and of all the people to be fully represented in their national legislature."

GOP CLAIM: "I'm not all that surprised by the Minority Leader's comments today. It's the same old song and dance. Are Republicans abusing the Rules process to stifle debate in the House? To quote Nancy Pelosi, the answer is 'No!' House Republicans have worked steadfastly to ensure Democrats are included in the rules process this year. Out of 15 amendments offered in order this year, eleven have been made by members on the other side of the aisle. Furthermore, Democratic motions to recommit have always been accepted. This is quite the opposite from the years Republicans spent under a Democratic majority in which our side of the aisle was completely shut out of the process. Since Republicans have taken the majority in Congress we have reformed welfare, provided a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, provided effective tax relief, ended lawsuit abuse and held the line on spending. If the Democrats would take half of their enthusiasm for obstruction and steer it towards working in a bipartisan way to help solve problems, Americans would be better off today because members of both parties would be at the table negotiating a way to strengthen Social Security." - Speaker Dennis Hastert ([U.S. Newswire](#) - 03/08/05)

TRUTH: If the Speaker is promising that in the 109th Congress, the Republicans will make 75% of Democratic amendments in order instead of 4% (see above), then he has read the report and taken its recommendations to heart.

As the report points out on page 14, two times during the 108th Congress the Republicans reported rules that denied Democrats the right to offer a motion to recommit, something the Republicans said they would never do when they took power in 1995.